

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 00521 020824Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EB-08 USIA-06 CTME-00 TRSE-00
SP-02 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 COME-00 /050 W
-----086084 021318Z /41

R 020505Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5868
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

QMKW/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 2665
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USINT BAGHDAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BTRA, PROP, XF
SUBJECT: ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION TO U.S.

REF: BEIRUT 763 AND PREVIOUS

1. VICE PRESIDENT OF BAHRAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, WHO
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REPRESENTED LOCAL CHAMBER OT ARAB CHAMBER MEETING IN FEB IN
AMMAN, HAS CONFIRMED THAT MISSION TO THE U.S. IS DEFINITELY ON.
JASIM AL-SAFFAR SAID THAT DATE IS NOT YET SET BUT GENERALLY
ESTABLISHED FOR MAY. THE ARAB-AMERICAN CHAMBER IN NEW
YORK IS TO BEGIN ARRANGING SUGGESTED ITINERARY WHILE UNLN
OF ARAB CHAMBER' STAFF PREPARES SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS.
WHEN THIS IS COMPLETED THE DATES WILL BE SET AND ALL DELEGATIONS

WILL BE CALLED TO A MEETING IN AMMAN TO RECEIVE THEIR ASSIGNMENTS AND TO TRAVEL TOGETHER TO NEW YORK. FROM NEW YORK DELEGATES WOULD BREAK INTO SEPARATE GROUPS TO TRAVEL TO DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE U.S.

2. AL-SAFFAR DID NOT EXPECT AS LARGE A GROUP AS MENTIONED IN REFTEL. HE EXPECTED MOST NATIONAL CHAMBERS TO SEND TWO OR THREE DELEGATES PLUS A SECRETARY. HE FURTHER INDICATED SOME DOUBT THAT ALL 21 NATIONAL CHAMBERS WOULD PARTICIPATE. AT ONE POINT HE MENTIONED THE FIGURE OF 60 BUT THEN QUICKLY ADDED THAT THE NUMBER COULD BE 100. HE ALSO IMPLIED THAT SOME CHAMBERS MAY SEND ONLY THE DELEGATION SECRETARY TO AMMAN MEETING WITH BUSINESSMEN JOINING GROUP IN NEW YORK. BAHRAIN HAS NOT SELECTED DELEGATES BUT AL-SAFFAR SPOKE AS IF HE EXPECTED TO GO.

3. AL-SAFFAR SAID THAT FINAL DECISION REACHED TO SEND DELEGATION AT THIS TIME ONLY AFTER LENGTHY AND "HOT" DEBATE. SOME DELEGATES TO THE FEB MEETING ARGUED THAT THE CHAMBER SHOULD NOT SEND THIS GROUP WHILE THE EGYPT/ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS WERE AT CRITICAL STAGE. PREVAILING MAJORITY BELIEVED THAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS WILL CONTINUE FOR "LONG TIME" BEFORE REACHING FINAL STAGE AND THAT THIS MISSION, ON WHICH PLANNING BEGAN BEFORE SADAT INITIATIVE, SHOULD CONTINUE NOW. AL-SAFFAR SAW MISSION AS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN IMPORTANCE TO AMERICAN BUSINESS OF ARAB/AMERICAN TRADE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORM OF DISRUPTION. HE MADE DEFINITE PLEA THAT MISSION BE VIEWED AS BUSINESSMAN TO BUSINESSMAN DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF MIDDLE EAST SITUATION AND ENTIRELY NON-POLITICAL.

4. NEAR END OF MEETING AL-SAFFAR ASKED EMBOFF IF USG COULD ASSIST THE ARAB CHAMBER MISSION TO THE U.S. EMBOFF EXPLAINED THAT PRIVATE GROUPS SUCH AS ARAB-AMERICAN CHAMBER ARE BETTER ABLE TO ASSIST. EMBOFF DID OFFER STANDARD COMMERCIAL TRAVELER SERVICES OF EMBASSY IF BAHRAIN DELEGATES WISHED TO COMBINE MISSION WITH PRIVATE BUSINESS VISITS. CLUVERIUS

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